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Amendment
Attorney Docket No.: 563.2-6748-US03

Amendments To The Claims:

Claims 1 - 84 (Canceled).

85. (Previously presented) A protective sleeve for a balloon dilatation catheter comprising:
an elongate tubular member having a neck portion and a slit extending along the entire length of the tubular member from a proximal end to a distal end thereof, wherein a distal portion of the tubular member is flared from the neck portion to the distal end of the tubular member to define an enlarged funnel-like opening.

86. (Original) A protective sleeve as defined in claim 85, wherein the slit extends along a plane that includes a longitudinal axis of the tubular member.

87. (Original) A protective sleeve as defined in claim 85 wherein the slit is helical.

88. (Original) A protective sleeve as defined in claim 85 further comprising:
an outer sleeve disposed about those portions of the tubular member proximal of the flared distal portion, the outer sleeve being configured to maintain the slit of the tubular member in a closed configuration.

89. (Original) A protective sleeve as defined in claim 88 wherein the outer sleeve is elastomeric.

90. (Canceled) A balloon catheter and a protective sleeve for the balloon of the catheter comprising, in combination:

a catheter having a shaft and a balloon mounted thereon, wherein the shaft has a distal tip portion that extends distally beyond a distal extremity of the balloon; and

a protective sleeve as defined in claim 85, wherein a proximal portion of the sleeve is disposed about and encloses the balloon, the sleeve being mounted on the catheter to locate the

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distal tip portion of the catheter at the narrowest portion of the funnel defined by the flared distal portion of the tubular member whereby a guidewire backloaded through the flared distal portion will be guided into registry with the distal tip of the catheter shaft.

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